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ABSTRACT

Teacher education programs must be redefined in order to emphasize three areas: authority; autonomy; and authenticity. The rebuilding effort begins with teacher educators, and how and what they teach prospective teachers. Teachers must be taught to be authorities and autonomous in their own spheres--in their classrooms and on their school staffs. They must be given opportunities to share their knowledge: their insights about children, curriculum and the management of these spheres. Prospective teachers must learn, through their teacher education programs, to assert themselves, to speak up for what they know, and to develop a healthy and action-oriented approach to education. An effective way to achieve this is through "advisement," a professionally intimate, long-term association between a teacher educator and student teacher. Through the advisor's ability to suggest, guide, listen, reflect, and demonstrate, the student teacher learns that the assumption of authority can be humane and benevolent while still being strong and effective. (CB)

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A.T.E. Summer Institute
Wichita, Kansas
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DARE WE BUILD A NEW TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM?

Advisement: A Model for One Component of the New Program

Yes, we certainly must build a new teacher education program, I believe this for several reasons:

If we are to change the way children and youth are taught we must change the ways teachers are educated.

If schools are to be places where teachers and pupils can learn together, we must change the way teachers are educated.

If teaching and learning are the most important things that take place in schools, we must change the way we educate teachers. I believe that we must rethink teacher education programs in relation to three areas:

authority
autonomy
authenticity

I will offer some definitions and limits first and will tell you a bit about where I am coming from. I am from Bank Street College of Education, a private graduate school for the professional education of teachers in early childhood, elementary and junior

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high school. We also educate special educators, computer educators, bilingual educators, and educational leaders, mainly supervisors and principals, all these roles from Kindergarten through 12. My remarks today will focus on teacher education, but will have relevance for the professional education of all other educators.

I believe that professional education is best done at the graduate level. However, I am well aware that most teachers at present and in the past have first been educated to teach while they were in undergraduate programs. In my state, New York, young people prepare for a teaching career while they are still teenagers. Our state university system, probably like yours, has many teachers' colleges where 18 to 21 year olds study to become teachers before they have learned much themselves by way of a discipline or an area of study.

Moreover they are still struggling with the developmental issues of late adolescence and early adulthood:

Who am I?
Who do I wish to become?
How can I learn to be close to one other person?
How can I be my own self, apart from others?

These classic developmental stages of identity establishment, intimacy and isolation are difficult enough to work through without adding to them a whole set of issues involved with authority. If we as educators are to enable adults to become competent teachers, we must be prepared to help them deal with

issues of authority, either at the undergraduate level --a harder time to deal with these issues, or on the graduate level when the prospective teacher is more mature.

When a person prepares to enter the classroom to teach children or youth, the student teacher has to deal with the following questions:

> Who am I in the lives of children?--The question of the teacher as authority figure.
> Who am I in the life of the School? --The issue of teacher as colleague and supervisee--issues of autonomy
> Who am I in the life of the community?--Teacher as professional--issues of authenticity.

The issues we as teacher educators must face grow out of these questions. How do we think about our programs in order to help our students meet these questions squarely and deal with them? I wish to suggest one part of a design for teacher education programs which attempts to address these issues--the issues of authority, autonomy, and authenticity.

The process I am about to describe is advisement. It is a professionally intimate, long-term association between a teacher educator and a group of students who are in supervised fieldwork or student teaching. It is intimate because it is based on mutual trust and growing respect. The student begins to trust the adviser because the adviser has been a classroom teacher and has lived through the trials and triumphs of day-to-day life in classrooms, because the adviser is always available, always there

for the students, in the way that the cooperating teacher is there for the children. It is long term (at least two semesters) because in this design of teacher education a major emphasis is placed on students having a variety of long term experiences with kids in classrooms, learning to live with and getting to know children in classrooms.

It is through this experience of teaching and learning with children over time under the supervision of the adviser (clinical supervisor) and the cooperating teacher that the student comes face to face with the question of who she/he is in the lives of children. How the student teacher moves psychologically from being "one of the kids"--"Mrs. B. is always picking on John."--to becoming increasingly willing to take an adult role--"John, you need to put the paint away now and join the reading group." Is a critical phase of growth toward becoming a teacher. Student teachers need time to examine how they feel about taking on new, more adult roles. They need a stronger, more experienced teacher/mentor to help them sort out where they live on the child-to-adult continuum, and how to shift into the kind of authority role that feels comfortable, works well, and is respectful of children and youth.

The adviser is the role model in this process. Through the adviser's ability to suggest, guide, listen, reflect, and demonstrate the student teacher learns that the assumption of authority can be humane and benevolent while still being strong and effective.

The second question for the student teacher, who am I in relation to my supervisors and colleagues in school--or stated another way--who am I as an adult under the authority of any

other people in schools--has to be worked on simultaneously. We all have our own horror stories of oppressive authority figures when we were becoming teachers.

Student teachers still view themselves very much as "low person on the totem pole". They feel ordered about and constantly under judgement. Often they are unsure exactly what they are supposed to be doing and, if they know what to do, they are unsure of how to do it. They have a notion that there exists "a way" and the only one who knows the way is the supervisor, usually a principal of cooperating teacher.

In situations where there is truly only one way, the supervisor's way, the student teacher experiences stress and oppression. Stress because it is impossible for a novice to measure up to a senior professional's mark, no matter how much the student teacher tries to do it; oppression because the expectation of perfect performance is unrealistic and inappropriate. What often happens to student teachers under such authoritarian situations is that they stop seeking to find out who they are as authorities in the lives of children and revert to teaching the ways they have internalized from their own teachers in childhood. They ten to try to recreate known authorities rather than to become their own authority.

A skillful adviser can help the student teacher deal with this not only by providing another model of authority--the mentor-guide model who supports strengths at the same time he/she raises

questions and points possible directions, alternatives and options.

The goal for this advisement process between student teacher and adviser is autonomy. The adviser's chief aim, in every facet of the student teacher's development as a professional, is to enable the student to move toward autonomy as rapidly as possible. Autonomy is achieved by helping the student teacher discover and practice those areas of strength, certainty and accomplishment which the student already has while bringing to the level of consciousness the many "next steps" which need to be taken.

The adviser may indicate directions, alternatives and consequences, but the student has to take the steps her/himself. The adviser is there then to help the student reflect on his/her decisions, to examine each decision and action.

Each small movement toward autonomy is examined and celebrated with the student. I am not talking here about praise--anymore than I am talking about blame or censure when things go awry. I am talking about the relationship between the student teacher and adviser being close enough so that the student shares triumphs and setbacks willingly with the adviser and with other students in the group, and where the adviser is in the student's classroom often enough that he/she can recognize progress and reflect on it with the student.

Every step toward becoming an autonomous professional is cause for celebration. It is so difficult for a person who is her/himself developing into a mature adult--sorting-out relation-

ships with friends, family, and lovers--to take on the added task of sorting out who he/she is with 20-some children.

The third question: Who am I as a professional educator in the community is a question which rarely gets asked while a student is in fieldwork. Our teacher education programs do not put students in positions where this question must be dealt with. If it arises at all, it usually is in relation to taking with parents of children in the student teacher's classroom. How can a young teacher-in-the-making relate to parents' concerns about their children's learning when the student has had precious little experience with children at all, and even fewer with children of their own? From where comes their authority?

There is no short route to developing this kind of authority. It emerges from experience. The novice teacher moves toward it by becoming a very skilled observer of children, becoming able to speak to parents with authority about their children because she/he has studied these children so thoroughly--because she/he knows those children.

Similarly the emerging teacher begins to be able to function as a professional among professionals by having repeated opportunities to speak and write for audiences of other teachers and educators, to participate in study groups. In the advisement process it is the group conference of adviser and students in the teacher education program which provides a safe and supportive arena for these skills to be practiced during the year of student teaching.

This may be a good time to elaborate on the model which I have been describing which has advisement as its centerpiece. Advisement has three parts: 1) the clinical supervision of the student teacher in the classroom which consists of periodic and frequent visits to th student in the classroom by the adviser, conferences with the student and the cooperating teachers, 2) conferences with the student alone at least biweekly, and 3) a weekly 2-hour group conference with all the students supervised by that one adviser (from 6 to 12 in our model). This group conference is an unagendaed session in which students are encouraged to describe their classrooms, children, and cooperating teachers, to analyse the curriculum and program, to review problems they are experiencing in school, to reflect on the relationships between what they are experiencing in the classroom and are learning in their teacher education courses. They quickly learn that they are each other's own best support group, that while their adviser serves as group leader, their peers are the ones who are experiencing the same growing pains and triumphs and who can respond most authentically. It is these peers who help each other recognize their own developing professionalism.

At the beginning of this talk I spoke of three A's--authority, autonomy and authenticity. It is my contention that teacher education must rebuild itself so that the authentic teacher can emerge. Authentic in this sense means "worthy of trust, reliance and belief, genuine." This is a goal for teachers and the programs which help them to become teachers--a goal which has been lost sight of. Who these days finds teachers worthy of trust, reliance and belief? Certainly not the educators who have written the recent criticism of the state of education: certainly not most other educators; certainly not textbook committees who want to make texts and curricula "teacher proof"; not software manufacturers, not unions; not school boards; nor most professional associations.

To be authentic, "Worthy of trust" teachers must be authorities and autonomous in their own spheres--in their own classrooms and on their school staffs. They must be given opportunities to share what they do know--their insights about children, curriculum and the management of these spheres.

I say that these opportunities must start in the teacher education programs. We must, help teachers to learn how to assert themselves, speak up for what they know, and develop a healthy questioning and action-oriented approach to education.

This will make our lives as teacher educators more difficult, more exciting, and much more rewarding.